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Irv Gotti Explains Label's Name Change, Won't Forgive Eminem

At press conference, CEO says he hopes 50 Cent beef dies down.
By Shaheem Reid
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NEW YORK -- Want to know the real reason Irv Gotti dropped the word "murder" from "Murder Inc."? Then go to the source.

Inc. CEO Irv Gotti held a press conference Wednesday (December 3) to explain the name change (see [article id="1480422"]"Murder Inc. Drops The Murder"[/article]), and the event drew a crowd that included Ja Rule, Ashanti, Russell Simmons, reps for the Minister Louis Farrakhan and Lyor Cohen, the head of Island/Def Jam.

Telling the audience that it was a big day for hip-hop and for his record company, Gotti deadpanned, "I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance," garnering laughs from the media and the small entourage that came out to support him. Then he got serious.

"We're good people -- I just wanted to drive that home today," he said. Giving a brief rundown on the origins of the label's name, he explained that he thought up the name Murder Inc. while watching a documentary on a collective of real-life hit men who went by the same name.

Gotti said his original intention with the name was to shock people and give them a catchy name to remember, but as of late, he said, "no one was looking at the talent" of his roster and people were just focusing on the negative connotations of the name. The hip-hop community understood that by using the word "murder," his artists meant they were "killing it" with their records, he said, but the mainstream media misconstrued the term. So after consulting Minister Farrakhan, the hitmaker changed the name. "My sole purpose is that everyone will focus on our talent and not our name," he remarked.

When the floor was opened for questions, the focus turned toward the Inc.'s notorious conflict with 50 Cent. Ja refused to comment, but Gotti said, "Everything with 50 is quiet. Maybe it could die down."

Responding to a question about Eminem's recently unearthed freestyle in which he disses black women (see [article id="1480512"]"*The Source* Digs Up Tape Of Eminem Using Racial Slurs"[/article]), Gotti said that unlike Russell Simmons he can't forgive Slim Shady.

"I can't give him no pass," Gotti said sternly. "I'm black, I love black women. We're defenders of black women."

After the press conference, he added, "I would be lying if I said [the situation with Eminem] didn't strike a chord. They don't give black [people] passes. When we do something wrong, we on full blast. It ain't, 'No -- oh well, he's good.' It's more disturbing, the excuse he made ... 'I was with an African-American woman.' So these are your thoughts on African-American women? It kills me."

Even with his label's name change, Gotti said he will not encourage his artists to make less abrasive music or even stop making their signature crew call of "It's Murrrderrr!"

As for the first release from The Inc. Records, it's already out. If you look closely at *Ashanti's Christmas* (see [article id="1479547"]"Ashanti Wants To Rock Wit U This Christmas With Holiday LP"[/article]), it bears the revamped label name. The first release of all-new music from The Inc. will drop in the next few months -- Ja Rule is working on an LP due early next year.